



## Knife River Indian Villages NHS News Release

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### Park Managers Seek Public Input For Archeological Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement

Stanton, ND: Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site will hold public meetings to gather input to guide managers in preserving the park's nationally significant archeological resources. On Wednesday, August 13, two meetings will be held at the Three Affiliated Tribes Museum, 404 Frontage Road, New Town, ND 58763. Prior to the general public meeting, a special meeting for tribal elders is scheduled for 2:00 to 4:00 pm CDT. The general public meeting will run from 6:00 to 8:00 pm CDT at the same museum location. A general public meeting will be held in Stanton from 6:00 to 8:00 pm CDT on Thursday, August 14 at the park visitor center. The park visitor center is located at 564 County Road 37, Stanton, ND 58571. Light refreshments will be provided. A short presentation will be followed by discussion.

Knife River Indian Villages National Historic Site was established in 1974 as the only one of 401 National Park Service sites that commemorates the extensive history and development of Northern Great Plains tribal cultures. The park is recognized as containing some of the nation's best-preserved examples of remnant earthlodge villages on the Missouri River in the Dakotas. The most identifiable archeological resources are the village sites, marked on the landscape by large earthlodge ring depressions. In addition to the village sites, dozens of archeological sites and features have been identified throughout the park.

The archeological resources and cultural landscape of the park are important in telling the story of the people who lived in this area over thousands of years. The park history did not end with the decimation of the village population from the widespread small pox epidemic in the early 1800's. These resources continue to be an essential part of the heritage and contemporary culture of the Mandan, Hidatsa, and Arikara Nation as their traditional homeland.

Several threats to archeological resources are currently affecting archeological sites in the park. Flooding and ice dams have eroded village sites along the Knife River causing irretrievable loss of village deposits and artifacts. Burrowing mammal excavation displaces archeological deposits and exposes artifacts. Woody vegetation growth displaces archeological deposits and archeological sites are currently maintained for visitor access. In addition to the naturally occurring threats, archeological resources may need extra protection measures due to infrastructure and road maintenance. Park maintenance facilities are located on archeological deposits and flooding has threatened access on both County Roads 18 and 37. All of these threats have taken a measureable toll on the park's primary resources.

Superintendent, Wendy Ross stated, "In the past, park managers were forced to employ emergency actions in response to flooding, road erosion, and loss of village sites. An Archeological Resource Management Plan will give managers a proactive strategy to protect park resources while resolving long-standing infrastructure issues." Park managers welcome public comment about archeological protection methods. Superintendent Ross went on to say, "The incorporation of tribal values and public concerns is a very important part of alternative development for the Archeological Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. We want the public to know they have a voice in how their resources are protected."



**National Park Service**  
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There are several ways to comment on the Archeological Resource Management Plan and Environmental Impact Statement. Attend the public meetings on August 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> in Newtown and Stanton. Enter your comments on the website [www.parkplanning.nps.gov/knri](http://www.parkplanning.nps.gov/knri). Mail your comments to: Superintendent, Knife River Indian Villages NHS, PO Box 9 Stanton, ND 58571. Call the park and add your information to our contact list or email comments to [knri\\_superintendent@nps.gov](mailto:knri_superintendent@nps.gov).

For more information, please contact the park at 701-745-3300.

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